



ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

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BRYANSTON 2021

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NEWSLETTER – JULY 2019

JULY LADIES' LUNCH:

On another lovely Highveld Winter's day, a goodly company of 62 members and guests assembled for lunch in the Gala Room and welcomed and called to order then stood for the Grace. Silvasale provided an excellent lunch of Chicken Liver Vol-au-Vent followed by Roast Beef with Rosemary Jus, rounded off by Poached Pears with Sabayon Sauce, all enjoyed in an animated buzz of conversation. The Chairman introduced Guest Speaker **Dr Anne Samson**, of the Great War in Africa Association, gave a talk on the role of Aviation in the African campaigns of that conflict. She gave an engrossing talk to a rapt audience. With meticulously researched and detailed visuals of the Squadrons, aircraft, pilots and operations in West and East African theatres, Anne gave background and insight into the role played by air power, with specific focus on the South African contribution to the Royal Flying Corps. This led to the formation of the SAAF in 1920 with the Imperial Gift of aircraft and spares. Q&A followed – and a number of the audience kept Anne engaged in informal discussion well after the end of lunch. The Raffle was drawn by Renee Clulow. A Senior member commented "another seamless and enjoyable gathering. Good food and service and a great talk!"

RAF and D DAY:

Most D Day accounts rightly and understandably focus on the landings and the action on the ground. However, it is widely accepted that the invasion and Battle of Normandy would not have been successful without the air supremacy fought for and achieved by the Allied air armada that ruled the skies over Northern France. The part played by air power in the success of the operation was crucial as senior Allied Commanders recognized, including General Montgomery, who had learned the lesson well from Air Chief Marshal Tedder in North Africa. The Allied Air Forces had at their disposal over 11,500 aircraft of all types. Of which 5,500 belonged to the RAF and its constituent air forces. Despite poor flying weather on 6 June 1944, with a cloud base of approx. 2000ft over the invasion beaches that morning, the Allies flew an astonishing 14,674 sorties during the 24 hours of D Day itself; the RAF contributed 5,656 to this staggering total. In comparison, the Luftwaffe flew 319. During the entire Battle of Normandy from 6 June to 31 August 1944, the RAF flew 224,899 sorties and lost 2,036 aircraft, with 1,035 aircrew killed or missing in action. *(Extract from "D DAY RAF" 75th Anniversary Publication kindly sent by Stan Smith)*

BERLIN AIRLIFT 70th ANNIVERSARY:

On 26 June 1948, 32 United States Air Force Douglas C-47 Skytrain transports flew 80 tons of supplies to Berlin, the first day of the Berlin Airlift.

At the height of the Cold War, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, occupying eastern Germany following World War II, blockaded the Allied portions of the city of Berlin, cutting off all transportation by land and water. This was followed by the building of the Berlin Wall. The western part of the city was now completely isolated. Josef Stalin hoped to force Britain, France and the United States to abandon Berlin, giving the communists complete control of the devastated country.

General Curtis LeMay was asked to transport the needs of the city by air. It was calculated that they would need to supply seventeen hundred calories per person per day, giving a grand total of 646 tons of flour and wheat, 125 tons of cereal, 64 tons of fat, 109 tons of meat and fish, 180 tons of dehydrated potatoes, 180 tons of sugar, 11 tons of coffee, 19 tons of powdered milk, 5 tons of whole milk for children, 3 tons of fresh yeast for baking, 144 tons of dehydrated vegetables, 38 tons of salt and 10 tons of cheese. In total, 1,534 tons were needed daily to keep the over two million people alive. Additionally, the city needed to be kept heated and powered, which would require another 3,475 tons of coal and gasoline. At the height of the airlift, one airplane was landing every 30 seconds. By the end, more supplies were arriving by air than had previously come by rail. When the airlift ended 30 September 1949, 2,326,406 tons of food, medicine and coal had been delivered – and 101 aviators had lost their lives. *(via Gen Des Barker)*

RAF FORCE LEVELS:

By way of contrast, the RAF currently has the smallest combat force in its history after shrinking by nearly half in the last 12 years:

- The smallest number of fast attack jets in its history, down 43 per cent since 2007 and little more than an eighth of its Cold War size
- New supersonic stealth jets have flown their first operational sorties, in Syria
- But there are only 17 Lightnings and 102 Typhoons in the fleet, which had more than 850 fighter jets in 1989
- The RAF said the number of aircraft does not equate to their capability

The RAF has lost nearly half its aircraft in the last twelve years, MailOnline revealed. Britain's new supersonic F-35 Lightning fighter jets have just completed their first operational missions – rooting out the remnants of Islamic State in Syria and Iraq in 14 sorties over the past ten days. But following the retirement earlier this year of the last of the Air Force's Tornados, the UK's 17 Lightnings are part of a forward available fleet of just 119 fast attack jets, down 43 per cent from 210 in 2007. It leaves the air force smaller than at any time since its creation during the First World War. The RAF said number of aircraft does not equate to capability and it has the jets it needs to meet its commitments. But military analysts have warned that whatever the sophisticated capabilities of the fourth- and fifth-generation planes of which the fleet is now comprised, 'no aircraft, no matter how capable, can be in more than one place at any time'. - *(Sent in by Ernie Todd)*

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6903811/RAF-combat-jet-numbers-reached-time>

BOEING, BOEING...

Boeing Co.'s 737 Max aircraft, grounded since March after two fatal crashes in five months, should be back in the air by December, according to a top Federal Aviation Administration safety official. It's not possible to give an exact date as work progresses on safety fixes to the aircraft, Ali Bahrami, the U.S. regulator's associate administrator for aviation safety, said in a recent interview at an aviation safety conference in Cologne, Germany. While the FAA is "under a lot of pressure," he said the Max will be returned to service "when we believe it will be safe." Knowing when the aircraft may return to service would help airlines contend with the disruption caused by the grounding of the narrow-body Max, Boeing's most popular model. The FAA has said that there's no time frame to sign off on Boeing's proposed software fix for the jet. However, subsequent reports indicate that the ungrounding of the Boeing 737 MAX could take longer than initially anticipated. U.S. Federal Aviation Administration officials revealed that they had isolated another problem in the aircraft. More problematic: the FAA were as yet unsure whether it could be fixed with a software patch or hardware fix. The 8 July test flight is now very much in jeopardy.

<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2019-06-12-boeing-737-max-to-be-flying-again-by-december-faa-official-says>

BARRACUDA:

The wreckage of a World War Two bomber has been lifted from the sea more than 75 years after it crashed off Portsmouth. The Fairey Barracuda Torpedo Bomber was discovered last summer by engineers surveying the seabed for an electricity cable between England and France. It is the "only one ever found in one piece" and the "last of its kind in the UK", according to Wessex Archaeology. It will be displayed at the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm Museum in Somerset. The 1943 three-seater plane is believed to have got in to trouble shortly after taking off on a test flight. It was found last summer by National Grid engineers. Euan McNeill, from Wessex Archaeology, said the plane was in "tremendous condition" despite being on the seabed for 75 years. "There are no existing examples of Fairey Barracudas that you can go and look at despite there being 2,500 of them in service with the Fleet Air Arm over the years. He said it crashed at quite a low speed in quite shallow water and was intact when it reached the seabed. The vast majority of it is all sat together. To find one that hasn't been destroyed by crashing into a hillside or blowing up is remarkable." The wreckage is expected to take around three weeks to recover. It will then be taken to the Fleet Air Arm Museum, to be studied and used to rebuild a full-size Barracuda. David Morris, from the museum, said: "We have been for many years collecting pieces with the aim to build and create a Barracuda aircraft for our collection. There are very few blueprints of the Barracuda plane design available, so this wreckage is a huge step forward for our project."

SINGAPORE SHENANIGANS:

June 25 (Reuters) - Unauthorised drone flying caused the second spate of delays and flight diversions in less than a week at Singapore's Changi airport on Monday night, the city-state's aviation authority said. Around 18 departures and arrivals were delayed and seven flights were diverted from the global transit hub due to "bad weather and unauthorised drone activities", the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore said in a statement on Tuesday. A similar incident involving drone flying affected 38 flights on Tuesday and Wednesday last week. Authorities are investigating. A surge in the availability of drones has become an increasing security concern for airports around the world. In December, drone sightings caused three days of travel chaos at London's Gatwick airport, resulting in the cancellation or diversion of about 1,000 flights at an estimated cost of more than 50 million pounds (\$64 million).

THE REGULATOR COMETH:

"Europe will be the first region in the world to have a comprehensive set of rules ensuring safe, secure and sustainable operations of drones, both for commercial and leisure activities. Common rules will help foster investment, innovation and growth in this promising sector" said Patrick Ky, Executive Director of EASA, in a recent interview. The new rules will replace existing national rules in EU Member States. The common rules will help drone operators, whether professional or recreational, to have a clear understanding of what is allowed or not. At the same time it will enable them to operate across EU borders. Once drone operators have received an authorisation in the state of registration, they are allowed to freely circulate in the European Union. This means that they can operate their drones seamlessly when travelling across the EU or when developing a business involving drones around Europe. The new rules include technical as well as operational requirements for drones. On one hand they define the capabilities a drone must have to be flown safely. For instance, new drones will have to be individually identifiable, allowing the authorities to trace a particular drone if necessary. This will help to prevent events similar to the ones which happened in 2018 at Gatwick and Heathrow airports. On the other hand the rules cover each operation type, from those not requiring prior authorisation, to those involving certified aircraft and operators, as well as minimum remote pilot training requirements. While the EU regulation will enter into force in the next 20 days, it will be applicable only in one year, to give Member States and operators time to prepare and implement it. As of June 2020 operators of drones will need to register in the Member State where they have their residence or their main place of business.

OR MAYBE NOT AOPA South Africa:

"SA Civil Aviation Authority's computers have been down all week. Most registers and other information has been inaccessible. CAA have been sending out frantic SMS messages assuring clients that their systems will be up soon, but it hasn't happened. We have received a number of reports that their systems have been hacked - and the hackers are demanding millions in ransom, or else their data will be deleted. If true, that could be catastrophic."

SPANISH FLU:

March 1918 the international influenza pandemic broke out, that led to the deaths of 50 million people worldwide. The pandemic spread simultaneously in Europe, Asia and North America over a twelve-month period between the last months of 1918 and the beginning of 1919. The First World War, while not the direct cause of its outbreak, contributed to its rapid spread worldwide. Soldiers malnourished and battle weary were particularly vulnerable to infection. As they were constantly being moved between different theatres of war across the globe, they spread the virus to many countries, including South Africa, where it made its appearance in September 1918. By the end of 1918, more than 127 000 Blacks and 11 000 Whites had succumbed to the epidemic. While some controversy exists as to the exact source of infection and its spread in South Africa, there is general agreement that the participation of soldiers in the War was a direct contributory factor in its arrival in South Africa. Its arrival here was initially linked to two ships, the Jaroslav and the Veronej, which arrived in Cape Town on the 13 and 18 September with members of the South African Native Labour Contingent (SANLC) on board. It was established that both ships had docked at Sierra Leone, one of the places regarded as a central point of infection. In general, about 500,000 people died of the epidemic in South Africa, the fifth hardest hit by the pandemic worldwide. 'So 'n treurigheid: oorlog, droogte, hongersnood en pestilensie; aan alle kante dreig die gevaar ons, terwyl die spaanse griep duisende van slagoffers daagliks om ons heen weg maai' (Such suffering: war, drought, hunger, and plague; danger threatens us from all sides, while daily the Spanish flu decimates thousands in our midst.)
(From a talk given by Prof Phillips to the Hermanus Historic Society – sent in by Rob Tannahill)

SONA DREAM:

TFR (SAR) is effectively dysfunctional except for the Richards Bay and Sishen - Saldanha coal and iron ore export lines. Yet SONA featured a new high-speed railway in its dream future. Wonder why? Maybe a clue from Kenya: Kenya's National Treasury aims to grow revenue from a levy whose collections and expenditure remain a mystery, even to the Auditor General. The management and use of the Railway Development Levy Fund (RDL), which was launched in 2013 and is charged at 1.5 per cent on all imported finished goods to fund the construction and operations of the standard gauge railway, is shrouded in secrecy, never mind that currently, the Treasury is using ordinary revenues to do the same job. Kenya Revenue Authority, National Treasury, Ministry of Transport and Kenya Railways remain tight-lipped on the amount collected over the years and how the funds are spent. "It is not known how revenue from the RDL is administered and there is a need for clarity on how much is collected annually and how the amount is spent," said Agayo Ogambi, Shippers Council of East Africa head of advocacy. Conservative estimates show that since 2013, the RDL has generated a staggering \$920 million based on the rate of growth in the value of imports, which increased from \$13.2 billion in 2012 to \$17 billion last year according to Kenya National Bureau of Statistics data.

NEXT FUNCTION:

AUGUST ORDINARY LUNCH: Friday 1 August 2019, 12h30 for 13h00 at Wanderers.

We hope to have Prof Justin Jonas to speak to us on the SKA (square Kilometre Array) and its various implications...

NB Lunch Fees now: R250 pp. If paying EFT, please use your "Name + Lunch" as "reference."
NEDBANK Melrose Arch, Branch 19 66 05 Account 19 66 278 063

All bookings please to bookings@rafoc.org or if you do not have access to e-mail:

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Look forward to seeing you there!

Cheers,

Bruce